A Celebration of Marriage

Catholics gather on the altar at Sacred Heart Church in El Reno after renewing their marriage vows in celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage on World Marriage Day. Sooner Catholic Photo/Ray Dyer

See Story, Page 11
The liturgical season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010. It is a penitential season which the Church observes throughout the world. Therefore, all Catholic people are given this opportunity to prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter. Archbishop Beltran invites Catholics of the Archdiocese to conversion and renewal. Therefore, to help us do so, the following regulations are to be observed in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City during this sacred penitential season of Lent.

Abstinence — Catholics 14 years of age or older must abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence. It is only on the other Fridays of the year that abstinence may be substituted by another form of penance.

Fasting — Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59 (inclusive) are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. There is a limit of one full meal and no food between meals on those days. Two smaller meals are permitted as needed to maintain one’s strength.

Sacrament of Penance — All the faithful who have reached the age of reason are bound faithfully to confess their grave sins at least once a year. Lent is a good time to fulfill this precept of the Church. Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion without previously having been to sacramental confession. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1457)

Holy Communion — Catholics who have received their first Holy Communion are obliged to make a worthy reception of Holy Communion at least once a year during the Lenten or Easter seasons. In the United States, this reception of Holy Communion may take place from the First Sunday of Lent, Feb. 21, 2010, through Trinity Sunday, May 30, 2010.

Other Lenten observances — Each weekday of Lent is also an obligatory day of penance. Some recommendations include participation in daily Mass, increased prayer or spiritual study, self-imposed fasting or abstinence, works of charity and participation in traditional Lenten devotions (parish missions, Stations of the Cross, rosary).

The proper context for all Lenten discipline is the conversion of our hearts. As the Catechism states, however, “Interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.” These penances help us to redirect our whole life to God and away from sin and the evil we have committed. (1430-1439)

As we celebrate our Lenten penitential practices, may we experience this conversion of heart and be strengthened in our faith in God’s mercy. May our discipline, through God’s grace, lead us to full participation in the eternal Easter.

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Helps People of Haiti

A sincere thanks is extended to all the people of our Archdiocese who made a financial offering for the Haitian people suffering from the earthquakes.

The combined financial support collected at each parish was sent to Catholic Relief Services which is responsible for overseas aid.

The combined amount from the parishes of the Archdiocese was $342,376.83. I am truly grateful to all of you who so generously contributed to assist our brothers and sisters in Haiti. Please continue to pray for them and their well-being.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
SHAWNEE — The cold temperature and the steady snowfall were a stark contrast to the exhilaration and enthusiasm inside the new Project Gabriel Center.

The Shawnee center, known as the Gabriel House, located at 613 W. Benedict, officially opened Feb. 11 after several months of renovation. Archbishop Eusebius Beltran was on hand to bless the building and speak to the crowd.

Those who braved the frigid temperatures and the snow were amazed to find what the center had to offer. Designed with the mothers in mind, the center offers a comfortable and homey environment with plenty of nursery supplies and maternal items.

Mary Brooks, coordinator of Project Gabriel in Shawnee, was visibly excited about the occasion and the newly remodeled building. Her enthusiasm was understandable because for the first time in eight years, she and her volunteers finally had a permanent place to work. The new center will serve as a welcoming location to build a trusting relationship with those mothers who come for guidance and assistance.

Project Gabriel is a parish-based, pro-life outreach ministry designed to help mothers of all ages who find themselves in a crisis because of an unplanned pregnancy. The project pairs each expectant mother with a “Gabriel Angel,” who becomes a caring friend and mentor for the mother-to-be. The “Gabriel Angel” offers assistance in locating resources and provides spiritual and emotional support during and after pregnancy. All Gabriel Angels are trained by the archdiocese’s Office of Family Life to minister directly to the mothers.

Brooks said that until last year, the Shawnee ministry did not have a central location. It had been operating out of makeshift locations including her car, her house, parking lots, or she would meet a mother-to-be in a restaurant. Last July she received permission from Rev. Don Wolf, pastor of St. Benedict Church, to use one of the rooms and the kitchen in the school building on a temporary basis.

With Father Wolf’s guidance and encouragement, the ministry has blossomed in new directions which included better quality care and expanded services to pregnant mothers in crisis.

When parishioners Chuck and Paula Barber, who own the local restaurant Benedict Street Marketplace, learned that Project Gabriel was in need of a permanent location, they wanted to help. Realizing that the vacant building next to their restaurant was for sale, they purchased the building, which was only a stone’s throw from the church. They agreed to let Project Gabriel occupy the building rent-free. They also proceeded to recruit a friend of theirs, John Jennings, who is a local contractor, to remodel the building into the Gabriel House.

When Jennings learned of the mission of Project Gabriel and the services it provides to would-be mothers, he offered to renovate the building for free. For the next few months, he spent his time transforming the vacant building into the beautiful Gabriel House, which, in addition to the office, also provides a living room, kitchen, dining area, laundry room, restroom, crafting area and storage. The local Ace

Continued to Page 4
Brooks said that since the Shawnee outreach ministry was established in 2002, it has helped more than 175 mothers in the Shawnee area, including 20 who were homeless.

"God is the one who sent people and physical resources to us ... As the ministry and the spirit grow, we get as much in return as the mothers we help."

— Mary Brooks

Brooks said there are currently 20 volunteers helping in different areas of the ministry. The scope of services they render to expectant mothers is all-encompassing. Not only do they offer assistance in acquiring baby clothes, maternity wear, infant items such as cribs, diapers and formula, but they also offer referrals for medical and counseling help. They provide transportation for doctors’ visits, shopping or church. They also host baby showers for the mothers.

In addition, the volunteers also help spiritually by committing to a Mass, a rosary or a daily prayer for each mother needing help.

Anyone interested in becoming a Project Gabriel volunteer may contact Brooks at (405) 620-2571.

Planned Giving is commonly used to describe commitments made by donors to transfer capital assets to religious, educational or charitable organizations. Most often, Planned Gifts are made by means of a formal agreement and the principal or income from the gift is not available to the organization until the terms of the agreement are fulfilled.

Planned Gifts are normally made from the contributor’s accumulated assets as part of an overall Estate Plan. Additionally, Planned Giving frequently results in tax advantages or other benefits to the donor.

For more information on the works of the Catholic Foundation, contact:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123
(405) 721-4115  www.cfook.org
bsemtnr@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

Catholic Charities Program Provides Assistance To Families

OKLAHOMA CITY — The uncommonly cold temperatures coupled with ongoing economic difficulties have resulted in more families struggling to make ends meet. With the heating bills coming in, the need for assistance continues to grow. Fortunately, Catholic Charities is offering assistance to some Oklahoma families who have been hit hard by winter heating costs.

“When the weather gets cold and stays cold, it puts a burden on local families to pay their utility bills,” said Nancy Largent, director of administration at Catholic Charities. “We don’t want families to have to choose between keeping their home warm, paying rent and putting food on the table.”

Catholic Charities’ need-based program provides emergency rent and utility assistance to thousands of families throughout western Oklahoma each year. In 2009, the organization provided 1,530 families with rent and utility assistance, a number which is expected to rise this year due to the state of the economy and the bitterly cold weather.

The utility and rent assistance program is open to people of all faiths.

Continued to Page 5
Catholic Foundation Grant Aids Language Program

A 2009 grant made by the Catholic Foundation to Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City is aiding their Spanish language program. The $2,000 grant allowed the school to purchase the Rosetta Stone Spanish Language Program, Level 2, for students in the third through eighth grades. This computer program helps to teach Spanish to the students and allows them to progress at their own rate. This was particularly important as some students speak Spanish at home. It was also important because of the difficulty in retaining a part-time Spanish teacher year after year. The school had made great progress in teaching the Level 1 program and was excited that a Catholic Foundation grant could allow them to purchase 20 licenses for Level 2.

Irish Celebrate National Catholic Schools Week

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School recently participated in Catholic Schools Week. This year’s theme was “Hands That Serve, Hearts That Care,” which ties into our gospel value this year of Caring.

There were many activities and projects scheduled to honor Catholic Schools Week. Each grade had a service project with opportunities for students to reach out to the community. Seniors helped Birth Choice and Infant Crisis Services by collecting baby boy clothes, diapers, formula and baby wipes. Juniors collected blankets, coats and other warm clothing for the Jesus House and City Rescue Mission. Sophomores took donations of Vienna Sausages for Sister BJ’s Pantry and bottled water for Hot Dogs for the Homeless. Freshmen assisted Pets and People by helping individuals adopt pets as well as collecting items for donation.

Club involvement included Clancy Club hosting a bake sale at lunch with proceeds going to buy a Shelter Box for victims in Haiti. CAMINO and Key Club members wrote letters and collected care packages for military serving overseas. Math Club and National Honor Society encouraged students to participate in mentoring a child. Fine Arts Club distributed a CARE Award (bookmark) to students and faculty members and asked that they give it to the person they feel demonstrated the most CARE during the week.

In Brief

Health Care Help Needed

EDMOND — Primary health care providers can have an awarding experience helping the uninsured of the Edmond community at the Good Samaritan Health Clinic. Volunteer at your own convenience once every month or two on Saturdays from 9 to noon. Physicians and advanced nurse practitioners in family or internal medicine are needed. For more information, visit goodsamaritanofedmond.com or contact Dr. “Mac” Macaraeg at macaraeg2@cox.net or 706-7068.

Rocket Coach Honored

In his sixth year as head coach, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School’s head boys basketball coach, Lenny Hatchett, has been named Region 8 “Coach of the Year” by the Oklahoma Basketball Coaches Association.

Coach Hatchett’s Rockets are currently 16-2.

In his first year, the boys varsity basketball team was 0-22 for the season. The team has turned things around, ending last year’s season with a state championship appearance and a record of 24-4. Hatchett credits the program’s success to focusing on the development of athletes when they are young and playing as many competitive 5A and 6A teams as often as possible.

Catholic Charities

Continued from Page 4

In order to qualify, recipients must enroll in the Family HOPE Case Management Program. Created in 1998, Catholic Charities Family HOPE Case Management is a long-term program that strives to improve the economic situation, home environment and social support of families. Those interested in learning more about the Family HOPE Case Management program are encouraged to log on to http://www.catholiccharitiesok.org/index.php?id=27 or call (405) 523-3000.

For those who would like to contribute to this and other community services, Catholic Charities is currently accepting donations online, through the mail and at their Oklahoma City headquarters.

“We rely on donations to make these programs possible, so it is a huge thank you to the community that we are able to support these families in their time of crisis,” said Largent.

For more information, please call (405) 523-3000 or visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org.
OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 700 high school students explored health care careers Feb. 5 at Mercy. The popular Mercy Health Career Exploration Day, now in its eighth year, gives area students a chance to learn about a wide variety of job opportunities.

“Students often think a career in health care is limited to being a doctor or a nurse, but there are so many opportunities in health care today,” said Kerri Beasley, RN, Mercy recruitment coordinator. “This event isn’t a lecture or some boring intro into health care; this is an exciting hands-on experience for students to see what they would get to do. We don’t just tell them about it, they get to see it up close.”

Students couldn’t agree more.

“We had the opportunity to feel a pig’s lung, practice giving a shot and even take part in a mock Code Blue,” said Mustang’s Caitlin Prinzo, a senior this year at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, who attended last year’s career day. “It was a real eye-opener to learn all the things you can do.”

Whether it’s actual hands-on experience or getting a chance to talk to real-life health care professionals, Mercy’s career day provides students with lots of information.

Studies have shown that the level of health care awareness among youth today is low. In order to educate students, Mercy has extended invitations to local high schools. Participating high schools and groups included Bishop McGuinness, Canadian Valley Technology Center, Chandler, Chisholm Trail Technology Center, Crescent, Deer Creek, Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center, El Reno, Francis Tuttle Technology Center, Mount St. Mary, Northeast Academy for Health Sciences and Engineering, Putnam City, Putnam City North and Yukon.

Students not only received lots of information but also talked one-on-one with a radiology tech, pharmacist, nurse, respiratory therapist, nutritionist, lab technician and many more professionals. Students viewed actual radiology and hospital equipment, educational videos, organ models and had the opportunity to win various door prizes.

“We want students to learn they have lots of choices,” said Bill Peterson, director of Mercy’s human resources. “Every year many students find the experience invaluable because they are able to see firsthand how numerous the opportunities are in health care. The possibilities really are endless.”

For more information on career opportunities at Mercy, go to www.mercyok.net or www.mercycareers.net.

OKLAHOMA CITY - Monsignor Dennis C. Dorney has been honored as Christ the King Catholic School’s “Distinguished Alumnus” for 2010. Monsignor Dorney is a 1956 graduate of Christ the King School and former pastor of Christ the King Church as well.

In 2008, Christ the King implemented the Distinguished Alumni Award and presents the award annually to an accomplished graduate, one who has contributed to the school itself, to the community, and to his or her own professional or volunteer opportunities. Monsignor Dorney has contributed invaluably to the Catholic community of Oklahoma by serving in several capacities throughout the years.

Father Dorney was conferred the title of Monsignor in 1996 by Pope John Paul II. He has served as an associate and pastor in various parishes in the Diocese of Tulsa and has also held several positions at the diocesan level including the positions of Chancellor and Vicar General. Monsignor Dorney has been pastor of the Church of Saint Mary since November 1995.

During a presentation at Mass on Sunday, Jan. 24, Father Rick Stansberry awarded Monsignor Dorney an engraved Waterford cross. A reception in his honor followed.

Christ the King Catholic School is affiliated with Christ the King Church, a member of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The school was founded in 1949. Financial aid is available to those who qualify.
Traditional Catholic Church Named for ‘Martyr of Charity’

CASHION — The new Catholic church being built south of here to serve the traditional Latin Mass community of Oklahoma City has been given its official name: St. Damien.

The church is located six miles south of Cashion on County Line Road and one-half mile east on Sorghum Mill Road at the site of the former St. Patrick Church. St. Patrick Catholic Cemetery is also there.

According to a Jan. 22 letter from the Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, he has named the new church in honor of Father (now St.) Damien of Molokai.

Canonized by Pope Benedict XVI last October, Father Damien was a Belgian priest who served leprosy sufferers who had been placed under a government-sanctioned medical quarantine on the island of Molokai in Hawaii.

After another priest — his brother — was unable to make the trip to Molokai due to sickness, Father Damien volunteered for the island missionary appointment, knowing full well that he would likely die there.

After 16 years caring for the colony, he eventually contracted leprosy and died of the disease. He is widely considered a “martyr of charity.” He is the patron saint of lepers and outcasts.

Father Damien is the ninth person recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church to have lived, worked and died in what is now the United States.

Father Damien died April 15, 1889, just seven days before the first Land Run in Oklahoma Territory — April 22, 1889 — which allowed for the settlement and development of the town of Lockridge. In 1891, St. Patrick’s Catholic Church was built there.

The town is long since gone and the original church burned in 1967.

The new church is presently under construction with completion expected before Easter.

St. Damien Catholic Church will be ministered by Father Howard Remski of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP - Fraternitas Sacerdotalis Sancti Petri), currently pastor of St. Michael’s Chapel in Bethany.
Rose Day Brings Throngs of Pro-Life Advocates To State Capitol To Urge Oklahoma Lawmakers To Support Sanctity of Life; Keynote Speaker Delivers Powerful Message of Love, Forgiveness

OKLAHOMA CITY — Alveda King, the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., told hundreds of pro-life advocates who packed the state Capitol for Rose Day that the struggle for civil rights continues today. Only now, the rights being fought for are those of the unborn.

King addressed the overflowing audience that filled the Capitol on Feb. 3. The annual Rose Day event brings pro-life supporters to our state’s Capitol where they reach out to elected lawmakers, urging them to support pro-life legislation.

Catholics were well represented at the event. Women from the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women and representatives from Catholic Charities and Birth Choice of Oklahoma Inc. were in attendance as was Father Stephen Hamilton of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Kingfisher.

Students from Mount St. Mary and Bishop McGuinness high schools were visible throughout the Capitol.

King captured the audience with her dramatic story of how years ago she had two abortions. The doctors who performed the abortions worked with Planned Parenthood and they had told her the children living inside her were only “blobs of tissue and cells.”

After again becoming pregnant in 1977, her boyfriend, a medical student and the father of her unborn child, set her straight. He told her the doctors earlier had lied to her.

“That’s not a blob of tissue,” he told King. “That baby has 46 chromosomes, 23 from you and 23 from me, and I want my 23 alive,” he told her.

She would later give birth to their son.

“Today, those 46 chromosomes are in law school,” she said to applause.
Catholic Women Gather For Annual Conference

By Eliana Tedrow
For The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 750 women traveled from across Oklahoma and surrounding states for the fourth annual “Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference.”

Young and old, women packed the Majestic Ballroom in the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center to be reaffirmed in their faith and values.

“The world sees freedom as doing anything you want to do — sleep with however many different people you want, have different relationships, do whatever you choose, divorce, whatever — if you don’t want to have a child you can just have an abortion, but when we do that it turns into bondage,” Teresa Tomeo, one of four keynote speakers, warned the attentive crowd.

Tomeo, a media professional with more than 20 years experience in secular media in addition to 10 years in the Catholic media, witnessed firsthand the effects a secular agenda has on culture, particularly the effects it has had on her own life.

“You think it’s a coincidence that women are under attack with abortion, with sexually transmitted diseases, with the objectification of women in the media?” Tomeo asked the audience. “None of this is coincidence. It’s spiritual warfare.” Among a host of examples, Tomeo points to the feminist movement as a moment in history where we as a culture went both in the right direction but also in the wrong direction. Specifically, Tomeo argues, people viewed the church as oppressive to women but, and as a result of the feminist movement, the Church argued more strongly that women should be treated fairly and equally to men.

“There is a lot of other things we have to look at the world has given us: abortion, contraception, they give us all these things clothed as freedom and it’s just the opposite.”

— Teresa Tomeo

In the lobby, mothers and daughters agreed. “The whole thing about the media and the dignity of women and how we’ve sold ourselves short — it’s all about our body image and if we’re overweight, etc ... that we need to appreciate the beauty of women, that God made us women,” said Teresa Sweedyk of St. Benedict’s in Tulsa.

Sweedyk and a handful of other ladies organized this year’s annual bus trip, which allows more than 50 women from at least six parishes in the Tulsa/Broken Arrow area to attend the women’s conference at a minimal cost. Father Joe Townsend of St. Benedict’s agreed to subsidize the bus, allowing the women to attend for $10 each plus the cost of the ticket.

“Here, I feel a sense of belonging and openness,” Anderson said. “The whole experience is great.”

Women also listened to lectures by Julie and Kirk Carrick on “Celebrating the Truth: Eucharist, Reconciliation and Marriage Life,” in addition to a talk by Elizabeth Ficocelli, who spoke on “The Age of Mary.”

Of their ability to provide such an impactful event to the Catholic women of Oklahoma, Kara Allen, acting director for the OCWC said, “It’s really neat to see the effects [the conference] has on women and that we’re able to provide this for them.”

More than 13 priests in addition to Sisters from across the state attended the conference.

The conference is sponsored by the OCWC, a non-profit organization comprised solely of unpaid volunteers. Cost of attendance is tax-deductible. For information on next year’s conference, visit www.ocwconference.com.
LIFE ISSUES FORUM

Health Care Reform and the Pro-Life Agenda

Due in part to a Senate seat switching parties in a recent special election, health care reform legislation may be stalled in Congress for now. Many had hoped that long-overdue reform, extending affordable health coverage to tens of millions of people who lack it now, was on the horizon. And some, disappointed at the current impasse, are looking for scapegoats.

One charge is that the Catholic Church doomed health care reform by its opposition to federally funded abortion coverage. One New York Times reporter, commenting on the bishops’ new letter urging Congress not to give up on authentic reform, described the bishops as switching to the “other side” of the issue after helping to bring the legislation near death.

The charge runs counter to a number of well-established facts.

First, the Catholic bishops have supported national health care reform for decades. Catholic teaching sees health care not as a commodity, but as a support for life and health that every human being deserves as a matter of right. The bishops wrote to Congress numerous times in the past year, urging progress toward authentic reform — reform that would make health care more affordable, ensure access to health care for immigrants, and respect life from conception to natural death while upholding rights of conscience. They urged that the legislation comply with policies on abortion and conscience rights that have long governed other major federal health programs. Making this bill into a vehicle for weakening or changing federal policy on abortion, they warned, would threaten the real goal of expanding access to basic health care.

Second, opinion surveys show that others agreed. Most American women and men don’t want abortion in their health coverage, and don’t want the government funding or promoting abortion. Legislation ignoring this strong sentiment would garner public distrust.

Third, the inclusion of clear language against federally funded abortion coverage is what saved health care reform legislation in the House of Representatives. The bill did not have the votes to pass, until the last-minute approval of the Stupak amendment allowed pro-life Democrats to support the bill in good conscience. The Senate refused this language, instead drafting a “compromise” that has failed to win support from groups on either side of the issue.

Fourth, it is the pro-abortion movement that has announced opposition to all current health care reform bills. The National Organization for Women, for example, opposes even the weak and loophole-filled Senate language on abortion, accusing Congress of “throwing women under the bus” to pass health care reform legislation. It is not difficult to see which groups want to hold reform hostage to impossible demands.

What does the future hold? To Catholics, abandoning helpless unborn children is not an option. Nor is abandoning millions of people who lack access to health care. Members of Congress made some progress last year toward reform that respects the life, health and conscience of everyone. They should not abandon the task, but try to work together on authentic reforms that can earn the support and trust of Americans who appreciate the dignity of each and every human life. The bishops would be the first to applaud that effort.

Doerflinger is associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops’ pro-life activities, see www.usccb.org/pro-life and www.usccb.org/health-care.

Priest/Author Takes Reader Into the Eucharist


The late Father Tadeusz Dajczer was a priest in Poland who died on Sept. 8, 2009. He was a theology professor in Poland. He wrote these wonderful meditations on the Eucharist in 2007, which have since then been translated and published in many countries. He wrote these meditations on a personal level, writing in the first person. He wrote like some of the spiritual writers of old like Thomas à Kempis, the author of The Imitation of Christ and of The Imitation of Mary.

Father Dajczer is encouraging the reader to think and reflect on the Mass and to realize what is really going on and why certain things are being done. He also encourages the reader to prepare better for the reception of Christ in the Eucharist. He also reminds the reader that Jesus is really present in the Tabernacles in our churches throughout the world. We can go there and visit with Christ. Father Dajczer teaches how the reader can better participate at Mass, but also in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. He talks about silence and how to participate more and on a higher level at Mass. Father Dajczer quotes from various people like Venerable Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, St. John of the Cross, St. Augustine, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, and others. He reflects on their writings and connects them with the Eucharist. Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the Archbishop of Krakow, Poland, provides the foreword.

Father Dajczer was the author of the popular book “The Gift of Faith,” which has been translated into 28 languages. On the front cover of this book is a picture of Pope Benedict giving communion to a nun. Father Dajczer’s last book is highly recommended to those looking for meditations on the Eucharist.

— Brother Benet Exton, O.S.B., St. Gregory’s University, Shawnee.
Parish Celebrates World Marriage Day


Deacon Lloyd Menz said Father Frank Schmitt, S.J., asked him to give the homily on this day. World Marriage Day is celebrated on the Sunday closest to St. Valentine’s Day, which this year actually fell on the Sunday.

Deacon Menz said the sacrament of marriage is unique in the way it is administered.

“In baptism, the priest or deacon administers the sacrament by saying the words and pouring the water. The priest administers the Sacrament of Anointing when he says the words and anoints you with the blessed oil. All of the sacraments are administered by someone who is ordained and has the faculties to do so,” Deacon Menz said.

“But marriage is different. The sacrament of marriage is actually administered by the couple when they give their consent, that is make their vows to each other. The priest or deacon is there as official witness of the Church to make sure the consent is given properly. The Church does not marry people, people marry each other. The man and woman give themselves to one another, they vow themselves to each other. And a vow is a solemn promise. A promise meant to last forever.”

Deacon Menz went on to say there are all sorts of self-help books for those preparing to wed — “How to Create a Perfect Marriage” or “The 10 Attributes of a Marriage That Will Last Forever.”

“They all talk about the importance of communication. You can’t work out a problem if you won’t talk about it,” he said. Deacon Menz said one suggestion he read said, “Never go to bed angry.”

He said at times he and his wife had been so upset they refused to speak to one another. They were mad, but they got over it. He said they never felt their marriage was threatened, they were simply angry.

“If anyone who has been married for any length of time tells you that every moment of their marriage has been unimaginable bliss, be careful. That person is probably getting ready to lie to you about something else.

“And that is why in the marriage vows people profess their love in sickness and in health, in good times and in bad. When people are married in the Church, they stand before God looking at an uncertain future and they say whatever we face we will not face it alone. We will be together.

“It’s through God’s grace and our own commitment to each other that we still stand together.”

Parishioners then gathered on the altar and repeated their marriage vows, administered by Father Schmitt.

Mooreland Catholic Honored For State Extension Service

STILLWATER — Thurman Fussell, a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Mooreland, and Knight of Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, recently received the State Friend of Extension Award at the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The award was presented during a ceremony on the campus of Oklahoma State University.

At Sacred Heart, Fussell has served as volunteer director of music for 38 years. He is a Cantor, and has provided religious education to youth for five years.

Recia Garcia, OSU Cooperative Extension Service Northwest District Family and Consumer Science Program Specialist, nominated Fussell for the award.

“Thurman infused vitality through multi-county partnering with Extension for educational program delivery, broad promotional efforts, financial and personnel support and relentless enthusiasm,” said Garcia in her nomination. “His involvement strengthened grassroots engagement in OCES programs and activities throughout northwest Oklahoma for over three decades. He is a most deserving person for this award, and it was an honor to nominate him.”

The award, presented by the Omicron Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi (Extension Service Veterans), is to recognize individuals who have had significant impact on the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Fussell served for 34 years as an Extension Service 4-H leader, teaching more than 5,000 youth in five northwest Oklahoma counties electrical safety, basic wiring projects, simple appliance repairs and public speaking.

In the 1990s, he worked with the Extension Service and first lady Shirley Bellmon to organize the Oklahoma Home-Based Business Association. Fussell helped established a Woodward County chapter and co-hosted the state’s first Home-Based Business Seminar, reaching 100 participants from 21 counties. Additional home-based business seminars co-produced by Thurman and the Woodward County Extension Service provided a required component for Woodward to become a “certified city.”

Letter

Thankful for Radio

To all of you at Annunciation Radio of Oklahoma:

I want you to know that I am thrilled with the extended hours of your broadcasts on 94.1 fm.

My parish asked me to send information about Catholic broadcasts so that the staff could share it with the parishioners. Also, a flyer was distributed at our RCIA.

I felt so blessed on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day when I was able to listen to Catholic programming all night and all Christmas Day. Praise be to God!

A 3- to 4-foot snowdrift had me "trapped" at this most holy time. A neighbor finally came and cleared my driveway on Sunday afternoon, but too late for Mass.

I praise God that He came to me in my need on Christmas through Catholic Radio.

Although I could not see another person in my home, I was not alone. Jesus was with me through the programming. I will be forever grateful to Him for this.

Please accept this small donation. My best wishes and prayers.

Joan Butcher
St. John Nepomuk
Yukon
Buenas Noticias...
Arzobispo Beltrán hace un llamado al pueblo Católico a la Renovación

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:
La temporada de liturgia de la Cuaresma comenzó con el Miércoles de Ceniza del 17 de febrero de este año. Es una temporada de penitencia que la Iglesia observa a través del mundo.

Por lo tanto, a todos los Católicos se nos ofrece la oportunidad de preparar nuestras mentes y corazones para la celebración de la Semana Santa.

El Arzobispo Beltrán invita a todos los Católicos de la Arquidiócesis a convertirse y renovarse. Por lo que para ayudarnos a lograr ésto deben ser observadas las siguientes regulaciones en la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City durante esta temporada sagrada de penitencia de la Cuaresma.

Abstinencia — Los Católicos mayores de catorce años de edad deben abstenerse de comer carne el Miércoles de Ceniza, Viernes Santo y todos los viernes de Cuaresma son días de abstinencia. Es sólo en los otros viernes del año que la abstinencia puede ser sustituida por otra forma de penitencia.

Ayuno — Los Católicos entre las edades de dieciocho y cincuenta y nueve (inclusive) se los requiere ayudar en Ceniza del y Viernes Santo. Existe la limitación de una comida completa y no comer entre comidas en esos días. Dos pequeñas comidas están permitidas cuando se necesiten para mantenerse fuerte.

Penitencia — Todos los creyentes quienes han alcanzado uso de razón tienen la fiebre obligación de confesar sus pecados graves al menos una vez al año. La Cuaresma es un buen tiempo para cumplir con ese precepto de la Iglesia. Cualquiera que está consciente de haber cometido un pecado mortal no debe recibir la Santa Comunión, sin previamente haber cumplido con el Sacramento de la Confesión. (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica 1457)

Santa Comunión — Los Católicos que hayan recibido la Santa Comunión, están obligados a recibir de una manera sincera la Santa Comunión, al menos una vez al año durante la Cuaresma y la temporada de Semana Santa. En los Estados Unidos, este hábito recibe el nombre de la Santa Comunión toma lugar desde el primer domingo de Cuaresma, veintiuno de febrero del año 2010, hasta el Domingo de la Santísima Trinidad, que es el 30 de mayo del año 2010.

Otras Observancias — Cada día de semana de Cuaresma, es también día de penitencia. Algunas recomendaciones incluyen participación en la Misa diariamente, incremento de la oración o estudio espiritual, imposición propia del ayuno o abstinencia, trabajos de caridad y participación en las tradicionales devociones de Cuaresma (misiones parroquiales, Via Crucis, rosario).

El contexto apropiado para toda la disciplina de la Cuaresma es la conversión de nuestros corazones. Como el Catolicismo establece, “la conversión interior impulsa a la expresión de esta actitud mediante signos visibles, gestos y obras de penitencia”. Las penitencias nos ayudan a re direccionar nuestra vida entera a Dios y los males de los pecados que hayamos cometido.

(Mencione las prácticas penitenciales de nuestras Cuaresmas, haremos experimentar la conversión de nuestro corazón y fortalecer nuestra fe en la misericordia de Dios. Puede nuestra disciplina, a través de la gracia de Dios, guiarnos a la participación total en la Pascua eterna.)

"Real y para siempre" vuelve al Centro Pastoral Católico el 27 de febrero
Una gran jornada para fortalecer el Matrimonio en total y completo español

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — La Oficina de Vida Familiar de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City en trabajo mancomunado con la Iniciativa Matrimonial de Oklahoma, vuelven a pautar un taller sobre la relación matrimonial para alcanzar una mejor proyección dentro de la vida familiar y la sociedad.

Las actuales circunstancias sociales y morales que se viven en el estado de Oklahoma son difíciles, tanto que estas pueden traerse de cerca la misma entrada de las relaciones humanas, la parte más delicada de la intima unión entre la familia y las zonas más sensibles del corazón humano. La inmanable tras

...continúa...
Las políticas de la reforma de salud pueden ponerlo enfermo

Por Sor Mary Ann Walsh
Conférence de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos

WASHINGTON — Los Obispos Católicos han exhortado al gobierno a que reforme nuestro debilitado sistema de salud durante décadas. Con este propósito, tanto la Cámara de Representantes como el Senado han aprobado sendos proyectos de ley que ahora deben reconciliarse en una legislación final. Pero el estado actual de la cuestión es insuficiente para poderlo a uno enfermo. Los jueces de estación en el Congreso tienen más que ver con la política que con la salud y esto ha creado graves problemas. A pesar de que los obispos desean una reforma de salud, la legislación propuesta podría tornar a los obispos en oponentes en vez de aliados. Hasta el momento la reforma de salud no es un hecho.

Problema número uno.
Derechos de conciencia. Tanto bajo la legislación propuesta como la Cámara como la propuesta por el Senado, empleadores tales como la Iglesia, podrían verse forzados a proporcionar servicios que violan directamente sus enseñanzas. De ninguna manera la Iglesia debería ser forzada a comprar, dentro de su propia casa, planes de seguro médico que incluyan procedimientos a los que la Iglesia se oponga. De igual manera el personal y las instalaciones para el cuidado de la salud tienen el derecho de actuar según su sistema de valores. Entérate otras cosas, la legislación final necesita un lenguaje similar al que se encuentra en la Enmienda Weldon, aprobada en 2004, que prohíbe a los gobiernos federal y estatal discriminar en contra de hospitales, doctoras y enfermeras que no practiquen, refieren o pagan por abortos. El personal y las instalaciones dedicadas al cuidado de la salud tienen derecho a operar según un sistema de valores que honre cada vida humana.

Problema número tres.
Justicia básica. Tanto los proyectos de ley de la Cámara como del Senado mantienen regulaciones que prohíben a los inmigrantes legales, personas que van de camino a la ciudadanía y pagan impuestos, el acceso a servicios de salud disponibles a otros contribuyentes. Los hombres y mujeres que, aunque se les permite luchar en nuestras Fuerzas Armadas, no son elegibles para Medicaid durante los primeros cinco años de su residencia permanente en Estados Unidos. Es deplorable que pidamos a estas personas que arriesguen sus vidas para defender nuestra nación pero no les permitamos el acceso al sistema básico de salud del país, los legisladores deberían asegurarse de que cualquier legislación final provoque acceso equitativo al cuidado de la salud para los inmigrantes y sus familias.

Problema número cuatro.
Riesgo para la salud en general. El propósito del Senado no permite que las personas indocumentadas compren seguro médico con su propio dinero. Esta postura no sólo a injusticia y la persona que compra seguro médico por qué no permitiría también que sea una mala política económica. Cuanta más gente participe en el fondo común de los seguros médicos mejor. La postura también amenaza la salud pública en general. Es estos momentos, muchas personas sin documentos se ven obligadas a acudir a las salas de emergencia para atención médica porque carecen de atención primaria que existe para tratar problemas tan simples y a la vez costosos como una infección de garganta por estreptococo o casos de tuberculosis. Si tantas personas como sea posible tuvieran acceso a un cuidado de salud decente, incluyendo cuidado que previene enfermedades serias o la trata temprano, entonces mantener el control de las enfermedades bajo control verdaderamente tendría opción de convertirse en la norma.

Problema número cinco.
Costos asesinados. Tal como la ley está escrita ahora, una familia de cuatro que gane 29,500 dólares anuales tendría que dedicar el cuatro por ciento de sus ingresos a pagar las primas de un seguro médico y tendría una protección inadecuada con deducibles y copagos altos. Esto supone unos 2,000 dólares al año. Los gastos de su bolsillo para cuidados médicos podrían alcanzar el 20 por ciento de sus ingresos. Mire el costo de la comida, la vivienda, el transporte, la ropa y haga cuentas. Es de desalmados forzar a las personas a que no pueden pagar entre pagar la renta y cuidar su salud, y también mantener la seguridad financiera mínima.

Necesitamos una reforma del sistema de salud en los Estados Unidos y estamos cerca de lograrlo, pero si el cuidado decente de la salud se convierte en un asunto de política en lugar de mirar por el bien público, entonces todos perdemos. Y eso es suficiente para ponerlo a uno enfermo.

Sor Mary Ann Walsh pertenece a la orden de las Hermanas de la Misericordia de las Américas y es Directora de Prensa y Medios en la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos.

Responde al Censo 2010 porque es una oportunidad para demostrar unidad y fuerza

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — La página del internet de la Oficina del Censo de los Estados Unidos dice: "En marzo de 2010, un formulario corto de 10 preguntas será enviado a cada hogar de los EE. UU. y Puerto Rico. Cuando reciba el formulario, simplemente responda las 10 preguntas cortas y luego envíe las preguntas por correo, en el sobre con franqueo pagado adjunto.

La Constitución de los Estados Unidos establece que al menos una vez cada diez años, las oficinas del censo contabilicen a la población de los Estados Unidos y de cada estado que lo forma. Llegó la hora de contarnos y decir cuántos somos, llegó la hora de que este gran país se dé cuenta que los latinos somos la minoría más grande de la cual se ha venido anunciando en diferentes proyecciones académicas y del propio censo. Es un momento histórico para la comunidad de origen hispano que tenemos con el Censo del 2010 y una oportunidad de ganar respeto y ser honestos a contestar esas 10 preguntas. Estamos orgullosos de ser personas de origen hispano, de ser inmigrantes, de ser contados como seres humanos, de que nuestras familias son ricas aquí, para que las autoridades gubernamentales puedan satisfacer las demandas y necesidades de nuestra población, que ha crecido rápidamente en los últimos diez años.

Por favor, responde al Censo 2010 y así tendremos una ocasión única para demostrar unidad, para ganar un verdadero respeto a nuestra dignidad como seres humanos. Convencido en la potencia más grande del mundo y todos los que vivimos aquí somos parte de los Estados Unidos, amamos a este país y vivimos ayudar y a construir una mejor sociedad.
We Often Struggle With Christ’s Order To Love Ourselves

Jesus tells us to “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” As good men and women, we are pretty capable at loving our neighbor. However, Jesus is also implying that we are to love ourselves as well as our neighbor. I believe that most of us struggle with how to “love” ourselves.

In addition, we hear that in order to love others, we are to love ourselves. This can be challenging. In fact, for most of us, loving ourselves sounds and feels like being selfish and self-centered. So how are we to distinguish between loving ourselves and being selfish and self-centered?

An idea might be that we learn to have compassionate understanding and acceptance of ourselves, which may help us to be forgiving and loving not only of ourselves but of others as well.

So, what’s keeping us from loving ourselves? Much is related to the beliefs we gained in our childhood and adolescent years. These beliefs may include that we are not as good as others, that others are more gifted than us, that in order to be equal to others we have to achieve and accomplish much, that we are worth what we accumulate and/or are recognized for, etc.

Other childhood beliefs might include: We cannot make mistakes; we must have high expectations of ourselves; to fail means we are failures; we must look good, be strong and not cry, etc. These are among the innumerable beliefs we absorbed in our early years, with a brain that isn’t fully developed until our mid-20s. These beliefs inhibit us loving ourselves.

In addition, while coping with these beliefs, we develop ways of behaving that helped us get by as kids but that are getting in our way as adults. These ways of behaving often become our character defects, our dark side, our sinfulness.

So, what does having compassionate understanding and accept-
Calendar

FEBRUARY
21 Pilgrimage Sunday, Mass begins at 11 a.m. and includes blessing of the sick and blessing of the children, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Novena prayers to Infant Jesus of Prague, Litany of the Infant Jesus, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church at 304 Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. (405) 567-3080 or shrineofinfantjesus.com.

22 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Staudt at (405) 282-6624 or Sister Silvia Negrete at (405) 232-7926.

23 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. All are welcome.

23 Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School registration dates for incoming freshmen with last names from G-M. Times are 6 to 8 p.m. in the McGuinness Commons. For more information, contact Amy Hanson at ahanson@bmchs.org or 842-6638 Ext. 225.

24 How Mark’s Gospel Inspires Our Prayer will be the topic of talks by Father Jack Zupey, SJ, at Corpus Christi Church, 1616 N. Kelley, on five Wednesdays of Lent at 6:30 p.m. Questions and discussion following each presentation. No fee for attending; all are welcome.

25 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish, in the chapel every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City 73132.

25 Support Group for RCIA Leaders and Team Members will meet at 11 a.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Oklahoma City. Lunch will be served. RSVP to Paul Stokell by e-mail pestokell@stfrancisokc.com or by phone, (405) 528-0485 Ext. 13.

26 Film and Discussion Series at St. Francis of Assisi Parish at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This month’s movie will be The Shoes of the Fisherman, directed by Michael Anderson, 1968. The movie will be shown immediately following the Lenten Simple Supper. Films will be shown in their entirety with an introduction, and a discussion following. Concessions and child care will be provided by the parish. For more information, contact the Religious Education Office at St. Francis, (405) 528-0485.

27 Presentation on the Rosary by Father Stephen Hamilton at St. Eugene Church from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The presentation will focus on the historical setting that figured prominently in St. Dominic’s use of the Rosary to battle heresy. Continental breakfast provided. Nursery available upon request. To register, call 751-7115 Ext. 120.

27 Keeping Sacred Space from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with Pat Ahern, Oblate. Come to explore the art of making Sacred Space and deepening your response to God. Place: Library at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call: (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $40 ($10 deposit). Bring a sack lunch.

MARCH
1 Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School registration dates for incoming freshmen with last names from N-Z. Times are 6 to 8 p.m. in the McGuinness Commons. For more information, contact Amy Hanson at ahanson@bmchs.org or 842-6638 Ext. 225.

1 A Lenten Mission will be held at St. Monica Catholic Church from 7 to 8:15 p.m. Father Jim Goins will present a “Three-Day Journey Through the Passion of Christ from the Gospel of John.” Nursery provided with reservations by calling 359-2700. St. Monica is located at 2001 N. Western, Edmond.

2 St. Charles School Open House, March 2 at 7 p.m. Take a tour of the school and talk with teachers, parents and the principal. This is your opportunity to enroll your child for preschool through eighth grade.

5 Holy Family Home Mass. 11:30 a.m., Holy Family Home, 6821 Eddie Drive, Midwest City. To confirm that Mass will be held that day and for directions, contact the HFM at 741-7419.

5 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.

6 Dinner/Auction for Villa Teresa Moore from 6 to 9 p.m. at St. Mark Church in Norman. Tickets for the fajita dinner will cost $15 per person or $25 per couple. We will have a live and silent auction. Child care will be available onsite for $5 per child. We are trying to raise money to build a storm shelter for our school. Please call (405) 691-7737 for tickets or for more information.

6 The 2010 St. Patrick’s Green Tie Gala will feature a dinner and auction at 6:30 p.m. at the Skirvin Hilton Hotel. Martin Rouine, consul general of Ireland, will also attend. Tickets to the Green Tie Gala are $125 per person with sponsorships available. All proceeds benefit the Sanctuary Women’s Development Center sponsored by Catholic Charities. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (405) 523-3000 or visit catholic-charitiesok.org

7 All Saints Catholic School open house and enrollment fair from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All Saints enrolls students of all faith backgrounds in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Visit our Web site at all-saintsok.org.
‘Hot Dog Man’ Still Rolling Along

‘Hot Dogs for Homeless’ Marks Seventh Year

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — On Super Bowl Sunday, people gathered in the parking lot of the Goodwill Store in downtown Oklahoma City. They waited for the caravan. They weren’t disappointed. Shortly before 1 p.m. a stream of SUVs, vans and cars pulled into the parking lot.

Among those getting out of the vehicles was Rick Swyden, also known as “the Hot Dog Man.”

Seven years ago Swyden started a ministry by providing hot dogs to the homeless who live along the fringes of the downtown area. Hot Dogs for the Homeless has expanded over the years and now includes volunteers who bring clothes and homemade cookies to the street people.

“It’s amazing,” Swyden said, gazing around the parking lot where schoolchildren handed out sacks of food to dozens of people. Swyden was especially excited by the fact on this Sunday, his Hot Dogs for the Homeless ministry was handing out its 100,000th hot dog lunch.

“Can you believe it,” he said. Seven years ago, Swyden delivered two dozen hot dogs to the homeless of downtown Oklahoma City. He got the idea after buying a hot dog for a homeless man he encountered along the River Walk in San Antonio, Texas. Now, seven years later, Swyden and dozens of helpers hand out more than 200 hot dogs each Sunday.

At first the ministry was supported by mostly Catholics, but today Baptists and members of Evangelical churches in the area are showing support for the effort.

There’s still plenty of Catholic involvement. Chris Cooper, a parishioner at St. Charles Borromeo, has been showing up each Sunday for the past two years. An avid mountain bike rider, Cooper helps those homeless people who have bicycles make repairs.

“It’s mostly flat tires,” Cooper said. He said Oklahoma City has an extremely limited mass transportation system which negatively impacts the poor and especially the homeless.

“These bikes aren’t a hobby for these people,” Cooper said. “If they don’t have these bikes, they can’t get to work.”

A bearded man, Rick Galvin, stands next to Cooper. He said without the help of Cooper, he might find transportation more difficult.

“He helps me tighten things up,” Galvin said.

To learn more, visit www.hotdogsforthehomeless.com.

Above, an old friend greets Rick Swyden, founder of Hot Dogs for the Homeless at the hot dog drop-off. The man goes by the name “Bear.” Swyden said he hadn’t seen the man in about three years.

Right, Swyden thanks Carol Heinen for her contribution of homemade cookies. Heinen is known as the “Cookie Lady” by the homeless in the area.